

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF FLORIDA

CASE NO. 25-cv-23182-RAR

C.M., MICHAEL BORREGO FERNANDEZ,
J.M.C., E.R., *on behalf of themselves and
all others similarly situated, et al.,*

Plaintiffs,

v.

KRISTI NOEM, *Secretary, U.S. Department
of Homeland Security, et al.,*

Defendants.

_____/

DECLARATION OF JUAN LOPEZ VEGA

I, Juan Lopez Vega, pursuant to the authority of 28 U.S.C. § 1746, hereby declare that, to the best of my knowledge, information, and belief, and under the penalty of perjury, the following is true and correct:

1. I am employed by U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS), U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), Enforcement and Removal Operations (ERO), as the Deputy Field Office Director (DFOD) in Miami, Florida.
2. I have held this position since February 9, 2024. Since February 28, 2025, I have been serving as the Acting Field Office Director ((A)FOD). As (A)FOD, I am responsible for the oversight of the ERO Miami Area of Responsibility (AOR).
3. At the ERO Miami Field Office, I manage ERO personnel and provide oversight of ICE operations in detention facilities housing ICE detainees. My responsibilities include,

overseeing ERO enforcement operations, and detention facility operations within the Miami AOR, including those at the South Florida Soft Sided Facility South (SFSSFS).

4. I am familiar with the allegations made by Plaintiffs in the instant lawsuit regarding the SFSSFS, which is also known as Alligator Alcatraz.
5. ICE's role concerning the development of the SFSSFS Detention Facility has been limited to touring the facility to ensure compliance with detention standards, and meeting with officials from the State of Florida to discuss operational matters. ICE has continued to work with Florida as Florida utilizes its 287(g) delegated authority.
6. Detainees housed at SFSSFS are at various stages of immigration processing. ICE makes decisions regarding transfer into SFSSFS based on the posture of aliens' immigration proceedings; however, Florida retains ultimate decision authority as to who is detained in the facility.
7. Florida operates SFSSFS under the authority delegated pursuant to section 287(g) of the Immigration and Nationality Act, codified at 8 U.S.C. § 1357(g).
8. Many Florida entities have entered 287(g) agreements since President Trump took office, including the Florida National Guard and several Florida law enforcement entities. Those agreements, including the date they were signed, are available on ICE's website. *See* [participatingAgencies07012025pm.xlsx](#). The agreements generally authorize those entities to detain aliens under the immigration laws. All 67 Florida Sheriffs have signed 287(g) agreements with ICE.
9. SFSSFS' use in detaining and housing aliens operationally benefits ICE as it maximizes detention capacity in furtherance of ICE's immigration enforcement mission. Ultimately,

the facility serves to decompress other detention facilities used to house aliens throughout the United States.

10. SFSSFS provides short-term housing while longer term housing or removal arrangements are secured for aliens for whom decisions have been made to commence or continue removal proceedings, or to execute a final order of removal and remove the alien from the United States.
11. ICE-ERO, which is headquartered in Washington, D.C., does not decide where immigration courts are placed or whether an immigration court has jurisdiction over detention facilities and their detainees. The Executive Office for Immigration Review (EOIR), an office within the U.S. Department of Justice, which is headquartered in the National Capital Region, oversees immigration courts.
12. The current head of ICE-ERO is Acting Executive Associate Director Marcos Charles, who is stationed at ICE headquarters in Washington, D.C.
13. Detainees at SFSSFS can file a motion for a bond hearing with the immigration court with jurisdiction over their removal proceedings or an immigration court with the jurisdiction over the place of their detention.
14. Detainees may request a bond hearing. If an alien has already had a bond request filed with the immigration court at the ICE Krome Service Processing Center (Krome) then ICE ERO will arrange to transport the alien to the immigration court at Krome for the bond hearing.
15. SFSSFS receives immigration detainees from across the State of Florida.

Signed this 7th day of August 2025.

**JUAN A LOPEZ
VEGA**

Digitally signed by JUAN A LOPEZ VEGA
DN: cn=JUAN A LOPEZ VEGA, o=U.S. Government,
ou=People, email=Juan.A.Lopez-Vega@ice.dhs.gov,
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Date: 2025-08-07T10:32:27-0400

Juan Lopez Vega
Deputy Field Office Director
Enforcement and Removal Operations
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